

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15
NSC-05 PA-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ABF-01 /069 W
-----047776 030610Z /10

R 020902Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5652
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MONTREAL
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, TH
SUBJECT: AMBER ONE OVERFLIGHT PAYMENTS

REF: BANGKOK 7626

1. AS A CURIOUS FOOTNOTE TO THE SAGA OF AMBER ONE
OVERFLIGHTS, WHICH HAVE OPERATED SATISFACTORILY
SINCE MARCH, IT DEVELOPS THAT NEITHER THE LAO NOR THE
VIETNAMESE HAVE YET ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES TO COLLECT
THE OVERFLIGHT FEES ABOUT WHICH THEY WRANGLLED IN THE
BEST TRADITION OF STATE CAPITALISM VERSUS PRIVATE
ENTERPRISE.

2. DURING LUNCHEON WITH AVIATION COLLEAGUES JUNE 1,
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BANGKOK IATA REP TOLD EMBOFF HE RECEIVED "NASTY
LETTER" MAY 29 FROM LAO AUTHORITIES WHO COMPLAINED
ABOUT NOT RECEIVING PAYMENTS FROM AIRLINES. IATA
REP SAID THAT, AFTER CONSULTING WITH MEMBER AIRLINES,
HE PLANS TO INFORM LAO AUTHORITIES THAT IT IS UP TO
THEM TO BILL USERS FOR OVERFLIGHT CHARGES AND THAT IN
ABSENCE OF SUCH STATEMENTS IT WILL BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE

TO KEEP PROPER BOOKS ON THESE TRANSACTIONS.

3. IATA REP SAID THAT ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IN AMBER ONE PREPARATORY TALKS WITH LAO AUTHORITIES HAD APPARENTLY ASSUMED THE LAO WOULD ADOPT THE SAME PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE VIETNAMESE TO COLLECT OVERFLIGHT FEES, I.E. AIRLINES AGREED TO PAY FWES AT THE END OF EACH MONTH THROUGH THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE OF THE VIETNAMESE EMBASSY IN BANGKOK. IN THAT REGARD, CATHAY PACIFIC MANAGER SAID HE HAS TRIED REPEATEDLY TO CONTACT SRV COMMERCIAL OFFICE TO MAKE PAYMENTS, BUT HAS NOT HAD A RESPONSE TO EITHER HIS LETTERS OR TELEPHONE CALLS. RTG MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICAL ADDED THAT THAI INTERNATIONAL HAS HAD SAME EXPERIENCE. (THAI INTERNATIONAL, IT SHOULD BE NOTED, IS ALSO OBLIGED TO PAY FEES ON BEHALF OF KOREAN AIRLINE FLIGHTS WHICH OPERATE OVER SAIGON, UNDER THAI INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT NUMBER WHILE IN VIETNAMESE AIRSPACE.)

4. ALL AIRLINE AND RTG OFFICIALS IN LUNCHEON PARTY EXPRESSED CONCERN OF UNUSUAL NATURE OVER DELAYED PAYMENTS. THEY NOTED THAT BOTH VIETNAMESE AND LAO HAVE DEMANDED PAYMENT IN US DOLLARS, IN CASH, RATHER THAN BY CHECK, AND FEAR THAT SUDDEN DEMAND FOR PAYMENT OF BACKLOG OF DEBTS COULD CAUSE DOLLAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LIQUIDITY CRUNCH IN BANGKOK. COST OF OVERFLIGHTS IS RUNNING AT RATE OF ABOUT \$250,000 PER MONTH. WHITEHOUSE

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